



COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines for the Minnesota High School Cycling League

As restrictions ease in Minnesota, we are able to cautiously resume activities. We know you're excited to get back to riding with your teams and we are, too! However, it must be done so in the safest way possible. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes the benefits of physical activity particularly in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge is to reintroduce physical activity in a manner that follows federal, state and county public health guidelines to reduce the spread of illness. This document provides guidance for the first phase of return to play following the direction of the county and state health department recommendations. As a living document, this may be updated as new information and recommendations become available.

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Practice Planning Will Be Essential This Year

- Head coaches will need to plan the progression of skills and activities in advance so they can communicate the plan to their coaches.
- Head coaches may not be able to address the whole group regularly, especially for larger teams. Be flexible and adaptable.

Communication with Coaches

- Hold a coaches meeting to think through practice plans and new considerations due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Practice plans should be emailed to coaches at least a day in advance of practice so coaches have time to digest the plan and ask questions as needed.

Communication with Student-Athletes and Families

- Embrace the ability to ride together and avoid mourning the ability to ride as a whole team.
- Reset expectations for the season. This season will feel different, but it can still be awesome. We can all have an awesome time riding bikes no matter the group size.
- Help student-athletes and families reassess the goals for the season and help them focus on controllables and avoid focusing on the uncontrollables.

Consider Having a Preseason Meeting to Discuss Expectations and Protocols

- Hold a virtual student-athlete and parent meeting.
 - Communicate how excited you are to be able to have a season.
 - Remind your team what makes your team special.
 - Reestablish that positive team culture you've been cultivating.
 - Explain the safety procedures that the league and the team are putting in place.
 - Explain expectations for anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Check yourself for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home for 14 days if you or a family member has symptoms. This would include anyone that athletes live with.
 - Explain how practices will be different.
 - Meeting places and times.
 - Grouping.



- Remind all families and student-athletes about the assumed risk involved with practicing and remind them that no one is required to attend practices if they don't feel comfortable.
 - Decisions should incorporate personal circumstances such as family members with whom they live or contact, being at higher risk for severe illness and/or other personal considerations.
- Plan for if someone tests positive for COVID-19.
 - Immediately let the head coach or team director know if a participant or a family member of a participant tests positive.
 - Head coach or team director should immediately let the league director know.

RETURN TO PLAY

During “Stay at Home” or “Shelter in Place”

- In-person activities prohibited.
- Train on your own with your own equipment.
- Virtual coaching. Follow [Electronic Communication and Social Media Guidelines](#).
- The league will exit this status on June 30th, at 11:59PM CDT.

Phase 1

- Small group activities are permitted – divide the team into groups that are no larger than 10 coaches/riders.
- All student-athletes and coaches must be symptom-free for at least 14 days and not exposed to anyone who is sick within that 14-day period before participating in group training.
- All student-athletes, coaches and support staff who are in a [high-risk category](#) or live at home with anyone who is in a high-risk category are encouraged to follow the guidance of health care providers and state and federal agencies in determining their level of participation in training sessions.
- All student-athletes, coaches and support staff should [screen for signs/systems](#) of COVID-19, including a temperature check prior to attending practice each day.
 - Any person with symptoms should not attend activities and contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
 - Unless directed otherwise by healthcare professionals or the state Department of Health, individuals who experience any of these symptoms may not participate at in-person activities until they meet the requirements stated in [publicly available guidance](#). Currently, MDH recommends that individuals stay home for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms plus a period of at least 3 days with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) and improvement of other symptoms. A different time frame may apply for individuals who receive an alternate diagnosis that explains the symptoms (i.e. norovirus, strep throat). Coaches and student-athletes should not take part in team activities for 14 days if exposed to an individual who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Coaches should ask all student-athletes, coaches and support staff if they are experiencing any of the [signs or symptoms](#) of COVID-19 prior to the start of all team practices and events. To the extent possible, these questions should be asked upon arrival to practice and before student-athletes, coaches, and support staff join the rest of

the team. Asking these questions before individuals join the group maximizes the chance for practice to continue even with a positive report.

- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in activities, should be sent home for the day, and should be directed to contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional. Individuals with positive symptoms should be isolated from the rest of the group while awaiting transportation home, when applicable.
- Unless directed otherwise by healthcare professionals or the state Department of Health, individuals who experience any of these symptoms may not participate at in-person activities until they meet the requirements stated in [publicly available guidance](#). Currently, MDH recommends that individuals stay home for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms plus a period of at least 3 days with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) and improvement of other symptoms. A different time frame may apply for individuals who receive an alternate diagnosis that explains the symptoms (i.e. norovirus, strep throat). Coaches and student-athletes should not take part in team activities for 14 days if exposed to an individual who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

WHAT DOES A PRACTICE LOOK LIKE?

Grouping and Coach: Student-Athlete Ratios

- Divide the team into groups that conforms with size limits.
- Grouping Techniques.
 - Keep groups consistent from session to session.
 - Keep households/families in the same groups if the skill differential does not create a safety issue.
 - Experience level.
 - Fitness level.
- Coach Ratios 1:6 or 2:8.
 - 1 coach (Level 2 or 3) per 6 student-athletes; or
 - 2 coaches (at least one Level 2 or 3) per 8 student-athletes.

Venue Considerations

- Make sure trailhead and parks are open.
- Post announcements about practice days to avoid overcrowding and impacts with other trail users using the league trail scheduling tool (metro teams).
- Check with your district if you use school facilities to meet or practice.

Make a Plan to Manage the Space at Your Venue and Trails

- Maintain social distancing at your trailhead.
- Be aware of an increased volume of trail users, especially new trail users.
 - Try to be extra nice and welcoming while maintaining social distance and communication.
- Clearly identify which trails each group will be riding.
- You may need to rotate practice days for groups to avoid overcrowding.
- You may need to plan staggered start times to avoid overlapping groups.
- Be explicit with your coaches and student-athletes about your expectations for social distancing during practice.
 - What does 6 feet look like at all of your venues?
 - [IMBA recommendations for safe riding during COVID-19](#).

- When passing or being passed by other trail users, communicate with them early and give lots of space for passing. If necessary, stop and get off the bike. This is not a race.
- Identify passing zones and areas to pull off the trail prior to your ride.

Practice Activities Considerations

- Set clear expectations about social distancing at every practice.
 - What does 6 feet look like - two bike lengths.
 - Model and remind student-athletes and coaches to maintain distance.
 - What does 20 feet look like when riding behind other riders.
 - Model and remind student-athletes and coaches to maintain distance.
 - No high fives or hugs, but words are GREAT ways to encourage and give affirmation to your riders. This one is going to be hard for many of us.
- Student-athletes and coaches should not share equipment, water or food.
 - All coaches and student-athletes should come prepared:
 - Tube, tools, pump.
 - Water and food.
 - Extra clothes.
 - Hand sanitizer.
 - Disposable gloves in case you need to touch someone else's equipment.
 - Mask, bandana or buff.
 - Consider sending student-athletes home if they come unprepared to help them build self-reliance.
- Coaches should take and archive attendance of student-athletes and coaches.
 - Attendance records will help with contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 test.
- Student-athletes should check their own bikes and coaches should avoid touching student-athletes' bikes.
- Maintain social distancing when lining up for skills and drills.
 - No static holds or partner demos.
- Play games that allow student-athletes to maintain distance – slow race, track stands, red light/green light, dual slalom, relay races without physical hand off.
 - Avoid games that require close contact – foot down, tag, bike soccer.
- Remind student-athletes and coaches to ride within their limits at this time.
 - Avoid pushing the limits of your student-athletes.
 - In your safety talk, remember to restate expectations to maintain social distancing and how to pass other trail users.
- Consider non-traditional practices.
 - Hold [scavenger hunts](#).
 - Ride to a beautiful location with your group.
 - Map reading and route planning – work with student-athletes to plan a safe route to a fun destination.
 - Virtually compete against other groups on your team and post them to social media of team email list:
 - Longest track stand – please speed up the video!
 - Most ridiculous social distancing group photo.
 - Most beautiful photo of your favorite trail system.
- [COVID-19 Teen Trail Corps activity considerations](#).

First Aid Considerations

- Add Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to your first-aid kit.

- You may not be able to maintain social distancing in the event of an injury. Make sure to wear PPE when providing aid to a student-athlete or coach.
- Add hand sanitizer to your pack.
- If a student-athlete, coach, or support staff reports symptoms of COVID-19 before practice has begun and before the individual has joined the rest of the group:
 - Isolate that individual and send the person home.
 - Communicate with the individual's family.
 - Notify your head coach and coaching staff.
 - Notify the league director.
 - Make sure that the individual follows the required protocol before returning to practice.
- If a student-athlete, coach or support staff reports symptoms of COVID-19 after practice has begun:
 - End practice.
 - Communicate with the student-athlete's or coach's family.
 - Notify your head coach and coaching staff.
 - Notify the league director.
 - Make sure that the individual follows the required protocol before returning to practice.
- Depending on the circumstances and level of contact between the student-athlete, coach, or support staff reporting symptoms, the rest of the group's families may need to be notified. This decision will be made in coordination with the league director.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are intended to supplement - not replace – league, local, state and federal health and safety laws, rules and regulations.

- [Minnesota Department of Health: COVID 19 Website](#)
- [Minnesota High School League COVID 19 Announcements](#)
- [Aspen Institute Return to Play COVID 19 Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)
- [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
- [NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities](#)
- [United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee: Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19](#)
- [USA Cycling Rider Recommendations](#)